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### **Southern California Tribe Donates \$100,000 to Assist Native Communities Gift Will Bring Long Term Disaster Relief to South Dakota Reservations**

Rapid City, SD – November 26, 2008 – The Black Hills Area Chapter of the American Red Cross is pleased to announce a recent gift of One Hundred Thousand Dollars, given in response to the November 5<sup>th</sup> Blizzard by the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians of San Bernardino. These funds will not only provide immediate disaster assistance, but address a greater need. The funding will go a long way in providing emergency services in disaster situations like the blizzard but will have a great impact as well in responding to home fires and other disasters on South Dakota reservations.

“When the Tribe was made aware of the situation at Pine Ridge and at Rosebud, we knew we had to assist our brother and sister tribes,” said Chairman James Ramos, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, “Living with wildfires in California, has taught us how to live with and react to natural disasters and we are fully aware that it is during these times that communities must come together to manage crises.”

The generous gift will be put to hard work serving eight of the top 100 poorest counties in the nation. Four of those counties are among the top ten which include Shannon County on the Pine Ridge Reservation, Ziebach on the Cheyenne River Reservation, Todd on the Rosebud Reservation and Corson on the Standing Rock Reservation all which are serviced by the Black Hills Chapter of the American Red Cross who will administer the funds. These services include food, clothing, lodging, health and mental health services to help people get through an emergency.

“Having funding specifically for reservation assistance is a much-needed lifeline. In the past year on the reservations we have responded to floods, a constant response to home fires, and the most recent relief effort, the blizzard,” remarks Executive Director Richard Smith. “The need for emergency services in these areas is great and the gift will go a long way in ensuring the Red Cross will be there in an emergency. We are truly grateful and fortunate to the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians for answering a need in our community that rarely takes center stage.”

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, California. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys, and mountains who share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as a sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Despite challenges and hardships, the San Manuel Tribal community has continued to progressively maintain and enhance its unique form of government – focusing all efforts

on providing a better quality of life for its citizens. Through economic diversification, both on and off the reservation, the tribe has been forward thinking in its efforts to build infrastructure, maintain civil services and promote social, economic, educational, and governmental units including the departments of fire, public safety, education and environment and continues to pursue opportunities for future generations.

The Black Hills Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, a nonprofit organization, continues to provide services to the Black Hills and throughout Western South Dakota in times of need. We do not receive federal monies for operations. Our mission is to provide relief to victims of disasters and help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Because of donors and volunteers, we are able to provide food, clothing, shelter, health and mental health services to clients and help them get through the emergency.